

██████████ Lutheran Church  
"STATEMENT OF FAITH"

### What Lutheran Christians Believe...

We believe, teach, and confess that Jesus Christ is the world's only true Savior and Lord, and that through faith in Him we receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. *"Jesus answered, I am **the way**, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6) NIV Wherever you are in your journey of faith, we understand that questions are worth exploring. To assist you as you journey with us, this is what we at ██████████ Lutheran Church believe.

### About the BIBLE

Everything we believe as Lutheran Christians comes from the Bible, God's message of love and hope for all people. The Bible is the written Word of God, handed down to us in order to point us to the truth that we are saved from our sin and eternal death by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe that the Bible is completely reliable and with no errors or contradictions. In it we learn everything we need to know about God's love and His gifts to us. *"All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."* (2Timothy 3:16) NIV

### About GOD

There is only one true God - the Triune God - who exists in three separate but equal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **God the Father** is our maker and the creator of all things. By the Father's word, all things were made, and we are His most loved creation; we are closest to His heart. As the loving Father, He not only made us, but continues to provide for our earthly and eternal needs. **The Son is Jesus Christ**, who came to earth as the perfect "go-between" between God and humanity. He did what we could not - lived perfectly under God's Law (was without sin) and took our punishment upon Himself - redeeming us from the power of sin and death. Jesus intercedes with the Father on our behalf. As Martin Luther put it in his explanation to the second article of the Apostles' Creed, "Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person . . . not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death..." (Luther's Small Catechism). **The Holy Spirit** calls us to believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, keeps us in the one true faith, and equips us for living out our faith. He is the whisper of God's voice in our lives.

### About US

Like our earthly parents, God the Father has given us His Law of what we are to do and not do. Yet we all fall short of God's expectations because we are all born "sinful." Sin can be summed up as all the things we say, think, do, and don't do, that fall outside of God's holy will (commands) for our lives and end up separating us from God. Sin was brought into the world when Satan lured the first people God created (Adam and Eve) into temptation through their own free will and weakness, breaking the perfect relationship between God and His people. From that point on, sin became part of our very existence. Because God also demands perfect obedience, our ultimate punishment became death. Yet God is a loving Father whose will is not for us to live in eternal punishment apart from Him. That's why He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to live the perfect life He requires and to become our substitute. Christ never sinned - not even once - and then He took our sin upon Himself and died on the cross, on our behalf. When we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, He bears our sin and gives us His forgiveness. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). NIV

### About "BEING SAVED"

The question is asked, "What must I do to be saved?" We ask it and so did those before us. Yet, there is absolutely nothing we can do to "be saved" - Jesus Christ has already done everything necessary. In His death and resurrection, everyone who believes in Jesus as Savior has been brought back into a right relationship with God. That means that, on account of Jesus, everyone who believes is "justified," or declared innocent by God. God has done justice to the world's sins - the punishment was completed - by Jesus. Because of Jesus, all who believe are forgiven and will live eternally. We do not cooperate in our salvation, and there is nothing we could ever present to God to make our way into eternal life with Him - not money or even good works. We cannot reason our way to salvation, nor can we earn it. All we can do is to believe in Him, trusting that all that is necessary has been done for us through Jesus. *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no*

one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9) NIV

### **About FAITH**

It is through faith in Jesus that we receive the forgiveness of sins and life that is eternal - by believing that He has freed us from the guilt, punishment, and power of sin. Faith is a gift worked in us by the power of the Holy Spirit; it doesn't come to us through anything we are capable of, but through what God does for us. We simply receive what is already being offered out of God's great love.

### **About GRACE**

Lutherans often refer to grace. Grace literally means "gift." God's grace is that which He freely gives to us – love, forgiveness and eternal life with Him. While we deserved to pay the penalty for our sins, God had a different plan. Christ paid the debt and we receive forgiveness and eternal life from Him that is offered out of unconditional love. That's why it's called grace, because it is truly undeserved. *"Because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved."* (Ephesians 2:4-5) NIV God has provided tangible ways through which He delivers His grace to those who believe, assuring us that the sins we commit are forgiven for Jesus' sake. These are called the "means of grace". They are God's Word, Holy Baptism, and the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion). Through these means, God makes Himself known to us in a very personal way: God's Word reveals His plan of salvation, faithfulness and love; the Sacrament of Baptism is our rebirth and renewal in Jesus; the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is our closest communion with Christ as we receive His body and blood.

### **About GOD'S LAWS (Right and Wrong)**

We all fall short of God's divine glory and we are all sinners. We believe that God Himself has provided the Ten Commandments to reveal His perfect/holy will and that He has provided those commandments out of love, just as our earthly fathers provide rules for our good. *"Therefore no one will be declared righteous [holy] in His sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin."* (Romans 3:2) NIV We believe that God's Word and will are unchanging. In accordance with Luther's Small Catechism, "we are to fear and love God" by following *all* of the commandments, including some which in today's society, have become acceptable behavior.

### **About GOOD WORKS**

Since there is nothing we can ever do to earn salvation, we do not do good works in order to *be* saved; good works are done in response to or out of praise and thanks because we are saved. Such good works include, but are certainly not limited to, serving and caring for the needs of others, honoring and giving respect to those in authority, honoring our vows and commitments, and generally doing what is considered by many to be good and right. It's often said that Martin Luther expressed it this way: God doesn't need our good works, but our neighbor does. Therefore, it is our duty to reach out to all people with the Good News of Christ and His redeeming sacrifice on the Cross. *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* (Ephesians 2:10) NIV

### **About the LIFE to COME**

God's Word teaches us that there will be a Judgment Day. It also says no one knows the day or the hour when Jesus Christ is going to return. But we are assured that on that day, everyone who has died will be raised and those who are still alive will be bodily transformed. At that time, the final judgment will take place. Those who do not believe will go into eternal damnation in hell, and all those who believe in Jesus as Savior will have eternal life in heaven. *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."* (Matthew 25:13) NIV

By signing below as Staff or as a Leader, you are acknowledging these beliefs as evidence of our Faith in the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_